Girls school damaged in IED blast

LAHORE: A government girls school was partially damaged in an explosion caused by an improvised explosive device (IED) in tri-border region of Taunsa district during the night between Jan 7 and 8.

The blast targeted the Government Girls Primary School located in Basti Jooter, Koh-i-Suleman tehsil, Northern Tuman Qaisrani, within the jurisdiction of Border Military Police's Lakhani post.

The area lies along the Punjab-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Balochistan boundary, making it one of the most sensitive security zones in Punjab.

Police said that the attack was carried out by Fitna al Khawarij affiliated with the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) / FAK (South Waliya Punjab). The device was detonated near the school building which caused collapse of the boundary wall, washroom, veranda and a classroom.

The targeted school was operating as an outsourced institution under Phase-I through a Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) licensee. It currently had an enrollment of 134 students with four teachers on staff.

The blast destroyed a portion of the school structure to disrupt academic activities in the area.

As there are winter vacation till Jan 11, no casualty was reported.

The region falls under the jurisdiction of the Border Military Police (BMP) while police have also established two check-posts (Lakhani and Jungi). Over 100 personnel have been deployed at each post.

Dera Ghazi Khan District Police Officer (DPO) Sadiq Baloch said security officials had cordoned off the area and initiated a search operation in the surroundings.

He said that bomb disposal and investigation teams had collected evidence. — **Imran Gabol**

Notification of PML-N candidate's win issued

DERA GHAZI KHAN: In a notification issued on Jan 9, 2026, the Election Commission of Pakistan has announced that a candidate has been returned uncontested to the Provincial Assembly of Punjab in a by-election.

The notification, issued under Section 75 of the Elections Act, 2017, confirms the result for constituency PP-289, DG Khan-IV. The successful candidate is Usama Abdul Karim of the PML-N. He is the son of Hafiz Abdul Karim and resident of Khayeban-e-Sarwar in DG Khan.

The formal announcement was made by Deputy Director (Coord) Muhammad Asad Ali on the order of the Election Commission. The notification has been sent for publication in the Gazette of Pakistan, Extraordinary (Part-III). — Correspondent

210 govt services to go online from Feb 1

LAHORE: The Punjab government has announced that 210 services of 15 departments will be available on its e-Biz Portal from Feb 1, eliminating the need for citizens to visit government offices.

The move is part of Punjab chief minister's digital governance vision, under which the government aims to expand the number of services on the e-Biz Portal to 310 by March, significantly widening access to public services through a single digital platform.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the administrative secretaries' committee chaired by Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman at the civil secretariat on Friday. The meeting reviewed key initiatives to accelerate e-governance across the province.

The Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) was formally directed to achieve the March target of 310 services on the portal.

Following successful implementation at the departmental-level, the chief secretary also directed that field offices and attached institutions must also be shifted to e-FOAS, enabling faster decision-making.

"Digitisation of administrative processes will free citizens from repeated visits to government offices," Mr Zaman said.

The meeting was attended by the additional chief secretary, P&D chairman, Board of Revenue senior member, and all administrative secretaries. The ACS (south Punjab), all divisional commissioners, and deputy commissioners participated via video-link. — **Staff Reporter**

Kinnow rate fixed at Rs1,600 per 40kg

SARGODHA: After a long meeting mediated by the district administration, the kinnow farmers and factory owners agreed on the kinnow rate of Rs1,600 per maund for the current week.

The meeting continued till late night in which all the concerned parties participated. The farmer representatives, while agreeing to the rate, thanked the district administration for listening to their position and playing a role in resolving the issue. They said that a long-standing dispute was resolved amicably with the timely intervention of the administration.

Representatives of factory owners and exporters also accepted the decision, saying that the reservations found among different communities had been resolved. — Correspondent

LAHORE: Vendors sell roasted sweet potatoes on a footpath on Jail Road. — APP

Court warns of cases against PHA officials responsible for cutting trees

Canal project's additional charge withdrawn from director; three officials suspended over cutting of tree branch

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Friday expressed its serious displeasure over the cutting of trees along the canal and warned of registration of cases against the officials concerned of the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA).

Justice Shahid Karim was hearing the petitions regarding the smog and other environmental and water issues.

During the hearing, Advocate Azhar Siddique informed the court that some trees along the canal near the Doctors' Hospital had been cut. In support of his claim, he also presented a video recorded on his mobile phone.

To a court query, Syed Kamal Haider, a member of a judicial commission, stated the PHA workers trimmed branches of the trees.

The judge observed that repeated orders had been issued by the court imposing a ban on cutting trees.

He expressed his regret that the PHA should have stopped this action, but instead initiated the tree-cutting itself.

Justice Karim sought a detailed report from the PHA on the matter.

The judge remarked that cases would be registered against the officials responsible for the tree cutting and they would also be arrested through court orders.

Asked about the status of an underground parking plaza in Nasser Bagh, Advocate Siddique told the court that the legality of the plaza's construction had already been challenged through a separate petition.

The judge sought a report by experts on the parking plaza.

The lawyer pointed out that Dungi Ground in Gulberg had been retrieved from commercial concerns after a long time, but a restaurant had now been established there again.

He further pointed out that a floating restaurant was being constructed on Canal Road near Jallo Park.

Justice Karim remarked that the court had repeatedly instructed the PHA not to use parks to build restaurants and instead libraries should be built there. He questioned whether running restaurants was the only job left for the government.

The judge regretted that public money was being wasted and decorative lights had been installed across the city.

Separately, the judge directed the government to monitor car service stations and impose heavy fines for water wastage.

The judge would resume further proceedings on Jan 12.

Meanwhile, the PHA withdrewon Friday the additional charge of the Canal Project from the director and suspended three others, over the cutting of a fully-grown branch of a tree along the Canal Road on Thursday.

According to PHA Managing Director Raja Mansoor Ahmad, the action was taken after some officials of the authority cut a full branch of a tree along the canal near the Doctors' Hospital underpass instead of trimming it, inviting public criticism.

"The officials, under the standard operating procedures (SOPs), are required to trim tree branches up to four feet or so. But, they chopped an entire developed branch of a tree, which shouldn't have happened," the PHA MD told *Dawn*.

"It's a serious negligence and cannot be ignored. Whosoever is found guilty of such acts must be taken to task," he said.

According to a PHA spokesman, as the administration, in line with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, is committed to protect and preserve trees and plants, it took a "strict" action over the illegal cutting of a tree branch on the Canal Road by removing the project director concerned from his position and suspended three other officials, including a supervisor, for violating the rules, regulations and procedures while performing their duty.

"Taking immediate notice of the incident, the PHA MD also ordered an inquiry against the officers/officials concerned. Following the findings, Director (Horticulture) Javed Ahmed was relieved of the additional charge of Project Director Canal. Meanwhile, Waqar Rehman, Project Director of Jilani Park, has been assigned the additional responsibility of the project director.

Meanwhile, Supervisor Zafar Iqbal and staff members Muzammil and Aqeel Hussain have been suspended.

A formal notification regarding the suspensions has also been issued. "The PHA is fully committed to making Lahore a greener and more beautiful city," he said and warned that no negligence, misconduct, or violation of rules regarding environmental protection would be tolerated under any circumstances.

MEETING: Punjab Horticulture Authority (PHA) Director General Naheed Gul Baloch has directed the heads of the newly established district horticulture agencies to submit detailed plans outlining measures to initiate horticultural operations in their respective cities.

She sought this during a meeting with the managing directors of the 11 newly-formed agencies. The agencies, announced recently by the provincial government, will operate in Jhang, Rahim Yar Khan, Khushab, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhupura, Okara, Gujrat, Jhelum, Murree, Khanewal, and Muzaffargarh.

Ms Baloch instructed the managing directors to present a roadmap to commence their agencies' operations and propose initiatives to enhance the horticultural and aesthetic beauty of their cities. She emphasised that the provincial body is committed to ensuring a greener Punjab, in line with the chief minister's vision, with additional focus on remote districts.

To facilitate the transition, the government has formed District Transition Teams (DTTs). These teams, initially headed by the relevant deputy commissioners, will oversee the transfer of material and human assets from municipal committees to the new agencies.

The managing directors were also instructed to arrange uniform kits bearing the PHA logo for their staff.

Suspect 'smuggling drugs' thru' Umrah pilgrims held

By Our Correspondent

TOBA TEK SINGH: Khurrianwala police claimed on Friday to have arrested a drug dealer who allegedly smuggled ice drug to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) by luring five members of a family through a free Umrah package.

According to a police spokesperson, the suspect, Saddam Hussain, was arrested in a raid in Jaranwala, during which more than five kilogram hashish was also recovered from him.

He said the suspect had sent five persons, including women, of a family to the KSA on the pretext of performing free Umrah, allegedly hiding ice drug in their luggage.

He said the drug was recovered by Saudi authorities from the luggage of the pilgrims when they reached the KSA.

A Saudi court later handed down the five Pakistani nationals 25-year jail terms each.

The spokesman said Saddam ran an international network of drug smugglers also operating in the KSA.

He said the arrested suspect would also sell hashish and ice in different areas of Pakistan, as well.

MURDER SOLVED: Jhang police claimed to have solved the murder case of a six-year-old orphan boy, who had gone missing from Mouza Kudlathi village, and later remains of his body were found in a field three days ago.

According to the police, the deceased child's uncle killed him to grab a piece of land.

Jhang DPO Bilal Iftikhar Kiani told a press conference on Friday that the orphan, Faraz (6) had gone missing on Dec 11, 2025 from the village in the limits of Satellite Town police and his body was found in sugarcane fields three days ago.

He said that initial investigation revealed that the deceased child was strangled to death by his paternal uncle Ghulam Mustafa, who wanted to grab the urban land inherited by Faraz after the death of his father.

He said the suspect had fled after killing the child, but was later arrested.

The police had earlier registered a kidnap case on the complaint of Fraz's mother.

The DPO said that earlier, the police had taken into custody two nominated suspects, who turned out to be innocent during investigations.

The DPO appreciated the investigation teams formed under the supervision of investigation SP Rana Rehman Qadir, which solved the case.

He especially praised Satellite Town SHO Shahid Amir Ludhiana and his team, and awarded prizes and certificates to them.

The DPO assured the child's mother that the police will ensure that the culprit gets punished as per the law.

Lahore bar election being held today

LAHORE: Stage is all set for the annual election 2026-27 of the Lahore Bar Association, the largest district bar of Asia, scheduled to be held on Saturday (today).

A total of 39 candidates are contesting for 11 offices of the association.

In addition to the two traditional rival groups' candidates, a third candidate is also in the race for the presidency. Two women lawyers are also participating in the elections, while one woman candidate has already been elected unopposed.

For the president slot, two former members of the Punjab Bar Council are once again facing each other.

Irfan Hayat Bajwa is the candidate of the Hamid Khan-led Professional Group and is contesting for president's office for the second time.

Ahsan Bhoon-led Independent Group, famously known as Asma Jahangir Group, fielded Adeeb Aslam Bhinder, who is trying his luck for the third time for the same post.

Shahid Jamal Butt is also contesting for the presidency as an independent candidate.

For the two posts of vice president, Chaudhry Mushtaq Jammu, Hafiz Mushtaq Naeemi, Sheikh Kashif Ali, Mian Tahir Munir and Humayun Zaheer Bhatti are in the contest.

For the vice president Model Town seat, Kashif Siddique Gujjar, Naveed Hanif Kamboh and Asif Kanwal Khan are contesting while for the vice president Cantt seat, Zahid Mahmood Gill and Imran Olakh are facing each other.

Shoaib Ashraf Bhatti, Chaudhry Afnan Munawar, Malik Fahad Nisar Khokhar and Rizwan Arshad are contesting for the two seats of secretary.

For the post of joint secretary, Samina Basra, Asad Abbas Sheikh and Salman Raheem Khokhar are in the race. For the finance secretary seat, there is a one-on-one contest between Zohaib Khan and Yasir Nazir.

For the post of library secretary, five candidates, including one woman, are contesting.

These include Samina Khokhar, Arshad Chadhar, Faryad Chaudhry, Talib Naqvi and Nauman Ali Goraya. For the post of auditor, Raheela Hafeez Rana has been elected unopposed.

According to Imran Masood, the chairman of the association's election commission, voting will be held from 9am to 5pm. As many as 15,790 eligible members would exercise their right to vote. The polling for the LBA elections would be conducted under a biometric system. — **Staff Reporter**

New model of public-private education launched

By Imran Gabol

LAHORE: The Punjab government established first-ever Nawaz Sharif School of Eminence to introduce a new model of public education reform in the province under public-private partnership to transform neglected government institutions into modern learning centres at tehsil Jalalpur Pirwala of district Multan.

The project was launched under the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) which marks a structural shift in public education across the province.

The foundation introduced the Nawaz Sharif Schools of Eminence initiative under the education policy direction of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, aiming to raise public-sector schools to international standards.

The Jalalpur Pirwala school became operational following the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on May 5, 2025, between Multan Commissioner Aamir Kareem Khan and PEF Managing Director Shahid Farid. Developed under the PPP model, the institution now spans more than 400 kanals and functions as a fully upgraded educational complex serving approximately 1,200 students from primary to secondary levels across Jalalpur Pirwala and the nearby areas.

According to officials, the transformation includes modern classrooms, academic systems, trained teaching staff and transparent management structures, resulting in rising enrollment and renewed parental confidence in government education.

The progress of the initiative was further reviewed during a steering committee meeting held on Jan 5, 2026, chaired by Provincial Minister for Education Rana Sikandar Hayat. The committee examined proposals submitted by various organisations for establishing Schools of Eminence under the programme.

PEF MD Shahid Farid briefed the committee on the project's objectives, implementation framework, and sustainability model. All applications and presentations were evaluated strictly according to approved terms of reference, with emphasis on developing institutions aligned with international education benchmarks.

The Punjab government considers the Nawaz Sharif Schools of Eminence initiative a core component of its broader education reform agenda, focused on innovation, accountability and public–private collaboration. Officials say the model is expected to expand across the province, setting new standards for governance, quality, and sustainability in public-sector education.